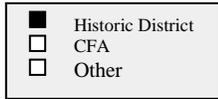


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: April 12, 2010
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 3420 Connecticut Avenue, NW – Sidewalk Cafe

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: Brennan Breidenstein (Authorized Agent)
Location: The property is located on the west side of Connecticut Avenue NW between Newark Street NW and Ordway Street NW. It is located in upper NW along a busy commercial corridor. It is located in a CP/C-2-A zoning district. It is also located in the Cleveland Park Historic District.
Proposal: The applicant is requesting an unenclosed sidewalk café area with 4 tables and 12 seats. The proposed seating area has a total square footage of 325.

BACKGROUND

The application was submitted to the DDOT public space permitting office on February 26, 2010.

BASIS OF REPORT

The Office of Planning (OP) has reviewed the application, considered existing site conditions, and completed research on the site to prepare this report. OP also referred to several policies in the Comprehensive Plan and other District regulations as part of completing this report:

Policy UD-3.1.2: Management of Sidewalk Space

Preserve the characteristically wide sidewalks of Washington's commercial districts. Sidewalk space should be managed in a way that promotes pedestrian safety, efficiency, comfort, and provides adequate space for tree boxes. Sidewalks should enhance the visual character of streets, with landscaping and buffer planting used to reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic.

Policy UD-3.10: Sidewalk Cafes

Discourage the enclosure of sidewalk cafes in manner that effectively transforms them into indoor floor space. The design of sidewalk cafes should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the adjoining buildings, should complement the street environment, and should not impede pedestrian movement.

KEY ISSUES

The proposed unenclosed sidewalk café has an area of 325 square feet and proposes 4 tables and 12 chairs. The 12 seats is less than the 21 that is allowed in an area of this size. However, the café as proposed does not provide an adjacent 10' clear pedestrian walkway, the preferred clear sidewalk width in an area with significant levels of pedestrian activity. The café should be reduced in size to maintain the minimum 10' clear pedestrian walkway. This will result in a smaller seating area and may impact the number of seats allowed. The sidewalk width from the property line to the curb is 32'-1". This includes an approximately 6' furniture zone. The sidewalk café as proposed would only leave an 8'-9" clear pedestrian walkway. A minimum of 10' should be maintained in this busy commercial corridor.

The application also includes a fence to further separate the café from the sidewalk. Because the proposed café is located in an area with high pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic and the application seeks to maximize the space available for seating, it may be advisable to remove the fence from the café to allow more room for seating. If the fence is still included then it should be removable, so that more sidewalk space is available when the café is not in use. In addition, the applicant should consider shifting the seating area closer to the building in order to maximize the sidewalk café space.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood, but the proposed area needs to be reduced in scale to allow for an appropriate amount of clear pedestrian walkway. This may impact the number of seats allowed as part of this application.

In addition, approval is needed from the Historic Preservation Office.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the following conditions:

- 1. The applicant relocates the café seating area and provides a minimum 10' adjacent clear pedestrian walkway**